

# MIGRANT

December 2016 Issue 31

# MAGAZINE



## Kentucky Migrant Education Program

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## A Letter from your state director about our Migrant Fall Academy

*By Heather Rhorer, state director*

It was a pleasure to see everyone at the 14th annual Migrant Fall Academy. More than 150 local Migrant Education Program staff members from 32 school districts and regions across the state attended. I want to thank everyone who presented at this year's conference. The committee looked at last year's evaluations and tried to find presenters who are experts in the fields that you requested.

The committee is already busily working on next year's conference and would like to hear from you. If you did not have a chance to complete the evaluation or if you have any new ideas for next year's Fall Academy, please share those with your

regional or state staff.

This year, we brought back an old tradition of recognizing outstanding staff members in different areas of the program, all nominated by you. We have included award winners below. Do you know a dedicated staff member, someone goes above and beyond, who you would like to see up on stage next year? If so, please watch your emails from the regional coordinators; nominations will be open during the summer and early fall of 2017. Thank you to everyone who nominated a staff member to the anonymous awards committee and to the staff who completed the work with such dedication and passion.



Left: Roger Rosenthal, executive director of the Migrant Legal Action Program, spoke at the Fall Academy about federal updates.



Below: The news recruiters learned about the STAMP of eligibility.

# The GAP Connection Training, Aug. 2-4, 2016

## Summaries from migrant recruiters across the state:

Tommy Fox, southern state recruiter

The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) meetings offered an excellent chance for staff from the Migrant Education Program (MEP) to network and meet farmers and workers together.

This allowed farmers and workers to obtain information and hear what we MEP workers do. I believe that this will prove to be valuable to future work in the field because

farmers will be educated about our program and it will be easier to speak with workers.

It was also a great experience for myself to help interpret about farm machinery safety because that information may help to protect some workers from injury. Overall, I think that it is a very informational, professional and positive program.

### Laney Deckard, Barren County Migrant Education Program

I participated in the GAP Connections Training Events in Owensboro and Glasgow. We met a lot of farmers and workers and were able to give them information about our program and the services we provide. The Owensboro/Daviess county recruiters were able to sign up three workers who were eligible for the MEP.

In Glasgow, I was able to see many familiar faces. We talked with three

Metcalf County workers who are already part of our program and a Barren County worker who is already part of our program. We gave out a lot of information, bilingual guides and our hotline freebies so that workers may contact us no matter where they end up working. I was able to chat with farmers about how the crops were doing and about what we are able to offer. One of the farmers I regularly work

with requested resources for helping workers learn English.

It is important to be at events like this in order to maintain relationships with farmers and to make ourselves familiar to them. This event was a great marketing tool for us and I was so glad to be able to collaborate with GAP Connections to promote our program. I look forward to attending training events in the future.



Tommy Fox, southern Kentucky recruiter, setting up for the GAP event.



A poster was used at the GAP event to tell participants about the migrant education program.

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## Rebecca A. Wilson, western state recruiter

Participating in the GAP Connections meeting with the other state MEP recruiters exceeded my expectations. I went in thinking it would be a good opportunity to recruit potential students to the program, which provides free education to young farmworkers. During the three meetings we attended in Owensboro, Glasgow and Springfield, I learned a lot about GAP, the agricultural industry and got to meet many wonderful people. The meeting enabled me to see the positive work GAP does in providing training to farmers and their workers.

I had heard little about GAP before the meetings, mostly about GAP audits. However, I was not aware of the exceptional work the program does in the field of agriculture by providing training and resources that make it easier for farmers to guarantee their products are safe. The meeting enabled us to connect with area farmers and workers to make them aware of our program and how it could benefit them. I know some of our state recruiters signed up workers for the program in their respective regions. The farmworkers enjoyed the giveaway items and raffles. I enjoyed meeting representatives of the Kentucky Farmworker Program and the Mexican Consulate, as well as the other state recruiters. It was uplifting to see a large turnout in Owensboro and Glasgow. In Springfield, however, I was able to listen in on the trainings a bit better as a result of the more intimate setting. The workers definitely seemed engaged in the trainings. It proved to be an excellent opportunity to make connections to fellow recruiters, partners, farmers and farmworkers across the state. I look forward to attending more events like this in the future.



Elma Simpson recruiter/advocate from Marion County and Rebecca Wilson, state recruiter for the western region, preparing for the farmers and workers to come by their booth.

## The Kentucky Migrant Education Program (MEP) at the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training

### Pedro Santiago, northern state recruiter

The GAP Connections organized three training sessions in Owensboro, Glasgow and Springfield. The training workshop provided an excellent networking opportunity for the farmers, workers and the community-based organizations.

These training sessions also provided a platform to share available resources and learn lessons to maintain production on farms. MEP staff were present at all three of the trainings and provided necessary support with interpretations and translation.

The staff members also provided additional information that would benefit schoolchildren. The MEP primarily serves all families who cross school district or state lines for temporary or seasonal employment in the fishing industry or agricultural sector (including planting, harvesting, processing, livestock and dairy farm work, as well as planting and cutting trees). Sexual harassment, field sanitation and housing, CPR, farm equipment safety, pesticide safety, heat stress and first-aid/emergency response were covered.

GAP connections worked with other organizations during the training sessions. Some agencies present at the tables include MEP, Mexican Consulate, Farm Bureau, Kentucky Farmworkers Project and Project B.E.A.M. (Bringing Education and Achievement to Migrants).

The training sessions provided an opportunity to bridge the gap between organizations and farmers/workers. Three youth who are currently working on tobacco farms were recruited for the MEP during the trainings. Anyone can call the MEP at (800)-234-8848 to check for eligibility.





Photos by Pedro Santiago

*At the GAP training sessions, MEP staff members networked with community-based organizations, workers and farmers from various Kentucky counties, as well as some from Tennessee. Farmers and workers received training related to safety regulations and health. Topics including The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) MSPA/H-2A . H2A is "nonimmigrant workers (H-2A workers) to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature."*

## Brenda Hernandez, eastern state recruiter

GAP training took place in several western Kentucky locations from Aug. 2–4. I had the opportunity to be part of the migrant education team at the events. Our purpose was to put the MEP front and center for those who work in agriculture yet don't know about our program and for those who might be eligible.

This was a unique experience for sure. For the first time in my short recruiter life, people were coming to me instead of me having to find people. According to GAP Connections, the training had 440 people in attendance, 317 workers and 123 growers. As a recruiter, this was very exciting.

We were able to sign up eligible workers on the spot.

These workers and growers will go back into their communities armed with flyers, cups, pens and information about our program. It is information which we hope they will share and spread among other growers and workers. In addition, we were able to network with other vendors. These connections are indubitably valuable and are certain to develop and strengthen with time.

It was a great experience to work side by side other migrant staff and share experiences, collaborate and present our program together. Events like this are a recruiting nirvana for our program. They provide a great partnership with the community. I look forward to doing this again.

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# Plancarte earns migrant scholarships

By Wes Feese, media relations, Adair County schools



Pablo Plancarte, left, was recently awarded two migrant scholarships for his outstanding scholastic achievement while a student in the Adair County School District. Plancarte, a 2016 graduate of ACHS, is pictured with Federal Programs Director Steve Turner. Photo provided by Adair County schools.

Adair County High School 2016 graduate Pablo Plancarte received two scholarships – totaling \$1,250 – to help pay for his education at Lindsey Wilson College.

Plancarte was one of 10 students in Kentucky to earn a Kentucky Migrant Program Association scholarship and the only recipient of an award from the Kentucky Migrant Scholarship Fund. Both scholarships require high ACT scores and grade point averages.

"I can't think of a more deserving recipient," said Steve Turner, Adair County Schools federal programs director. "I had Pablo in class when he was in middle school and he's always been a smart, hard-working student – a really good kid from a really good family. He's accomplished a lot and I'm sure those accomplishments will continue."

Plancarte, a biology major at Lindsey Wilson, plans to become a pharmacist.

## Clinton County Summer Program

By Ammie Marcum, community education director, and Wayne Hughes, Clinton County migrant advocate

Forty-five students from preschool through high school participated in the 2016 Migrant Summer Program. The program included activities for migrant students of all ages. Participants had the opportunity to attend summer camps and programs, including 4-H Camp, Salvation Army Camp Paradise Valley, Camp Earl Wallace, Trooper Island Camp, Christian Walk Day Camp, ROTC Camp, Healthy Kids Camp, 21st Century Summer Camp and the Library Summer Reading Program. Home visits were made during the months of June and July to preschool students and other students who did not attend summer camps or programs. Forty-two parents and students also enjoyed a field trip to Beech Bend Park in Bowling Green.

Has your family has moved from one town or school district within the past three years? Did you move seeking agricultural work (this includes working at Equity Group)? If so, you may qualify for the Migrant Education Program. For more information, contact Migrant Program Director Wayne Hughes at (606) 387-6272.





# Awards presented at the 2016 Fall Academy

Some outstanding people in the migrant program were honored with awards this year. Below are the winners:

Exceptional Summer Staff Award: Danielle Hicks, Clinton County



Danielle Hicks from Clinton County, left, receiving her award from Cindy Sasser, western regional coordinator

Hicks is a dedicated 6th-grade English teacher during the school year. For the past 12 years, she has given up her summer break to make home visits for the Migrant Education Program. Hicks understands the challenges that face migrant families and works to bridge the gaps they present. From the bonds she has built with the children, to the respect she has earned working with their parents, students and parents alike are fortunate to have her as a mentor and friend. Hicks' ability to make others feel comfortable around her has children wanting to learn and parents excited to see the progress their children are making. From working with the migrant students using new technologies such as drones and iPads, to more traditional methods such as flash cards and worksheets, she incorporates games that make learning fun. Hicks is always receptive to new ideas and is constantly looking for innovative methods to present course content.

Hicks has impacted so many migrant students' lives. A student who at one time was reluctant and shy, developed such a bond with Hicks that she would only sit with Hicks on the bus ride to Beech Bend – not with her mother or other children. This is just an example for the love and attention Hicks provides to all her students. She has made multiple home visits to persuade a reluctant student and his mother to participate in the summer program. She never gave up and was determined the program would have 100 percent participation.

Rookie of the Year: Larissa Woodie, Metcalfe County

Woodie has been described as “absolutely amazing.” She is a great leader, teacher, mentor, colleague, recruiter and tutor who has done amazing work with the students she serves. On a daily basis, Woodie goes above and beyond what she is asked to do and really connects to the families she serves. She collaborates well with teachers, administrators, Migrant Education Program (MEP) staff, community partners and all those associated with the MEP. Woodie's enthusiasm for the program is contagious. She motivates the students in her county. Woodie has been willing to learn all aspects of the migrant program including tutoring, teaching Out-of-School Youth, leading Parent Advisory Committee meetings, recruiting, mentoring students, assisting families and any other tasks that have come along in the past year. Woodie is such a strong leader and others in the program have learned from her wealth of knowledge.



Larissa Woodie, left, receiving her award from Cindy Sasser, western regional coordinator.

## Veteran of the Year: Robin Pitvorek, Hardin County



Robin Pitvorek, right, receiving her award for Veteran of the Year from Cindy Sasser, western regional coordinator.

Pitvorek has been with the Migrant Education Program since 2002 and is outstanding in all aspects of migrant education. She takes an extremely large district and, with grace and vast knowledge, makes it seem very small. Every day Pitvorek strives to make the program the best it can be and her effort shows in all she does. She makes everyone feel welcome and promotes confidence in everyone she encounters. Pitvorek creates a home atmosphere that allows staff and all she serves to feel important and respected. She trains everyone in her path on migrant education, taking the time to answer every question that comes her way. The compassion she has for her position and this program is inspiring. When you combine Pitvorek's knowledge, enthusiasm for migrant education, compassion for families and staff, and her superior work ethic, it is very clear why she is deserving of this award.

## Recruiter of the Year: Mayra Duncan, Logan County

Before she was even hired, Duncan was contributing to the success of the migrant program and impacting lives. Six years have now passed and she has not stopped. Duncan is constantly recruiting and striving to make this program the best for the families and out-of-school youth we serve. Recruiting is just a part of who she is. Duncan makes contacts wherever she goes to help locate new OSY and families. She created a Facebook page to keep in contact with OSY while they are here and when they return to their homes.

Duncan takes a personal interest in those we serve, spending time on weekends, nights and whenever she is called upon to assist families and OSY with problems. She has personally taken youth to the doctor, dentist, home with her or anywhere they needed to go. Her fierce determination was demonstrated when a family was going to be evicted because they had a faulty septic system. Duncan worked for weeks with the inspector, hiring a backhoe to do the work, working with agencies to collect money for the expenses and staying to supervise the digging and placement of the new system.

She is one of those rare individuals you can depend on when times are rough. Duncan's love for education has prompted her to ensure children are in camps, summer school and after-school programs. She has personally provided transportation for many to be involved in athletics and the county choir. Duncan's passion is for children to become the best they can be and have every opportunity. To this end she has become personally involved in working with parents to help them understand and value education for their children.

Duncan can relate to the families because she remembers growing up in Puerto Rico. She is a person who believes that a cycle can be broken and you do not have to repeat mistakes. Duncan fully believes life can be changed for the better.



Mayra Duncan, left, receiving her award for Recruiter of the Year from Cindy Sasser, western regional coordinator.

## Advocate of the Year: Sherril Tanner, Webster County

In his 27 years with the Migrant Education Program, Tanner has seen and done it all, but his most important role is being the ultimate advocate for migrant students. If you want to know what it looks like to work “flexible hours”, just follow Tanner around for a week. He works whatever day or time necessary, regardless of how many hours he has already put in, to see that all students’ needs are met. Educationally, Tanner regularly monitors student progress to ensure students remain on track and provides intervention when necessary. Long before the utilization of student data became stressed, he began a “Data Retreat” with stakeholders in the

district to disaggregate data related to migrant students. Tanner uses this time not only to evaluate student progress and tailor individual services in a collaborative environment, but also to educate district staff on the goals of the migrant program and the unique needs of the population in general.

Tanner also strives to see that his students are exposed to and take advantage of as many experiences as possible. Beyond field trips, he has taken students to state and national conferences to present workshops. Tanner has also arranged for them to interview key people in the migrant education community such as Julie Chavez Rodriguez, granddaughter of Cesar Chavez, and Oscar Ramos, the teacher featured in the documentary “East of Salinas.” These opportunities widen students’ horizons and serve to motivate and strengthen their resolve to succeed.

Several years ago Tanner started the Webster County Latino Alliance (WCLA). This is a club open to any student in Webster County, but predominantly attracts secondary

Hispanic students. The goal of the club is to develop individual leadership skills and promote a sense of community among participants. Tanner goes above and beyond to ensure students are well cared for. He works with families to connect them with the services they need, whether it be a bed to sleep on or food for their cupboard. He has a vast network of community partners who assist in this effort but he does not hesitate to provide help from his own pocket when all other avenues have been exhausted. Tanner has intervened on many occasions to ensure the safety of students. He has even arranged for alternate placement for students when their home environments become unsafe.

Tanner is the very definition of “speak softly and carry a big stick.” He knows every facet of the law surrounding the rights of migrant workers. Tanner has used that knowledge on many occasions throughout the years, from ensuring student’s civil rights are not violated, to proper enrollment in school, to correct identification of student needs and placement. He does not hesitate to fight the battles to ensure fair treatment of his students, but does so in a calm and professional manner.

Over the span of his remarkable career in migrant education, Tanner has cultivated an environment of trust and respect among the migrant population and community as a whole. He is well respected among migrant educators at all levels for his dedication and expertise. Tanner has been especially invaluable to the regional office, serving three different directors over his 27 years. The program benefits from his vast experience and willingness to work collaboratively, regardless the project, to make the program better for students and families. Tanner is the embodiment of what it means to be a true advocate. The heart he has for migrant students and the lengths to which he goes to ensure their success makes Tanner more than worthy of recognition.



Sherill Tanner, right, receiving the Advocate of the Year award from Cindy Sasser, western regional coordinator.



## Regional/District Support Staff: Sara Haney, Southern Regional Service Center at Eastern Kentucky University

Haney has served as a records clerk for the past five-plus years. From the moment she walked through the door – which just happened to be the first day of regional summer camp in 2011, Haney has been a rock-solid regional clerk and an anchor for the regional team.

She is a sponge, absorbing every ounce of knowledge, not only about her immediate job responsibilities, but also about many other aspects of the roles and responsibilities across the Migrant Education Program (MEP).

Haney quickly established the general protocol for the specific job responsibilities as a records clerk and as she went along, found ways to make the process her own. She took her time to get to know each staff member across the region and to learn about them and from them.

Haney has a genuine heart to help others and build rapport with district staff. She is always willing to sit on the phone, send however many emails needed and even to make visits to districts to make sure that staff are at ease with the processes and procedures that have been established at the state and/or regional levels.

In addition to the tasks of a records clerk reviewing Certificate of Eligibilities, entering data into MIS2000 and keeping track of all the paperwork and documentation needed for each migrant child in each district across the region, Haney serves as the office manager for supplies and ordering and manages all facets of the financial records related to the regional budget. Her tireless efforts as the anchor of the regional office team help in many ways to provide support to offer the best possible solutions for everyone involved.

Haney also goes above and beyond her general responsibilities as she wants to learn about the children and families we serve. Even with so much intra-state movement across the MEP, she is quick to know who our children are and remembers those who move a lot and understands the challenges they face. She will ask about family needs. Haney will come across items that someone wants to donate and she always thinks of our families first. Just this past Christmas, when tasked to gather input and decide how our regional office team would celebrate together as a staff, Haney brought full consensus to the idea of sponsoring a family that was in need. She worked with staff to make the selection and helped to gather sizes for clothes and a wish list for the children. A day was set to go as a team and make purchases and deliver the gifts to the family. Haney said it was one of the best feelings to see the family so elated that we had chosen them to help make their Christmas brighter.



Sara Haney, right, receiving the award for Regional/District Support Staff from Cindy Sasser, the western regional coordinator.

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## Regional/LEA Administrator: Michael Hay, director of the Southern Kentucky Regional Service Center

Hay has served the migrant and Limited English Proficient (LEP) population for the last 19 years, 14 as regional director. As director of the Southern Kentucky Regional Migrant Service Center, he serves on local, statewide and national committees. Hay's past experience includes working with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education as a contract service panel reader for High School Equivalency Program (HEP)/College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) and site coordinator for Eastern Kentucky University's Kentucky Limited English Proficiency Academy. In his tenure as director of the Southern Region Migrant Service Center, Hay implemented the Migrant Summer KEYS (Knowledge, Education, 'Yes You Can' attitude, Success) Academy and the Operation Migrant Graduation Program, which focuses on college and career readiness, graduation and character building skills. The academy began in 2003 and continues to be a high-light for the migrant students of Kentucky.

A passion for community service is evident in Hay's volunteer work for organizations including the Harvest of Hope Scholarship & Emergency Fund, Kentucky Migrant Education Program (MEP) Scholarship Fund, Kohl's Cares for Kids, Kentucky Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Leadership Central Kentucky, Mike's Kids Educational Foundation, Migrant Network Coalition, Migrant Head Start Advisory, Chamber of Commerce, Richmond Tourism and Beta Theta Pi International Fraternity. Hay's selfless community outreach has earned him several honors including Outstanding Alumnus Award, District Chief of the Year, Dr. Edward B. Taylor Advisor of the Year Award, Outstanding Regional Volunteer Award and the Distinguished Leader Award.

MEP staff offered the following comments about Hay:

An example of Michael's leadership is during local monitoring. He never reviews with a "got you" approach, but in a positive way to improve our programs. He truly cares about staff. **Lili Robertson, Madison Co. Recruiter**

Michael lives and breathes the MEP. He is the MEP guru for our regional staff, KY MEP and KDE. Michael pushes his coworkers and subordinates to be at their best. **Sara Haney, SKY Regional Staff**

When I first started with the MEP in 2012, with no migrant experience, our local program was barely surviving. Michael advised me every step of the way in changing our program. In four years, our program has more than doubled in size. His knowledge of the MEP is astronomical. **Betty England, Lincoln Co. MEP Advocate**

Michael Hay is an exemplary role model. I am a student of the SKY MEP. Michael's dedication has had proven impact on those around him, including me. There are others that have impacted my life, there are few that I hold memorable. Michael is one of those few. He has a mission to reach out and impact students, and will go the extra mile to reach them. He's provided me opportunity through the Summer KEYS Academy and inspired me to search my soul, not only dream of the amazing things I can accomplish and ensured that I have the tools and the confidence necessary to assert myself into society and accomplish my dreams. **Joseph, migrant student**

I have had the privilege of working with Michael for the past 11 years and I can vouch for his determination, hard work and effectiveness. He has been an outstanding mentor, colleague and leader of the Migrant Education Program. Michael has been the key player in sustaining



Michael Hay, coordinator of the Southern Region, receiving the award for Regional/ LEA Administrator from Cindy Sasser, western regional coordinator.

our Migrant Scholarship Program. Many migrant students have had the opportunity to further their education because of his hard work and dedication to the MEP Scholarship. Michael has also been a key player in planning the Kentucky Migrant Education Fall Academy each year. From locating keynote speakers to identifying specific professional development needs of migrant staff across the state, to recruiting vendors to general organization of the event, his experience is invaluable. Michael's dedication to migrant education goes beyond the end of the work day. He volunteers on many committees which serve the university and community. Through networking with many professionals on these committees, he has found valuable resources for our migrant program. He is very resourceful and willing to help others any way he can. Michael has been a wonderful mentor to me for the past 11 years. Though we don't always see eye to eye, he has a unique way of helping others see things from another angle. He is a great problem solver and has a gift for helping us find solutions to problems we face in the MEP. **April Harper, director, Central Region Migrant Service Center**

Michael's behind the scenes passion and work often goes unrecognized because that's how he prefers it. He is truly an unsung hero who strives every day to keep the Kentucky Migrant Education Program reaching for new heights.

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### Upcoming Dates

March 13-15: Western Regional re-interviews

March 20-24: Eastern Regional re-interviews

March 20-24: Southern Regional re-interviews

April 17-21: Central Regional re-interviews

April 24-28: Northern Regional re-interviews

April 30-May 3: National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (NASDME) Orlando, Fla.